UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

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TOPOCK MARSH ON LOWER COLORADO RIVER STABILIZED TO PRESERVE FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES

The Department of the Interior said today that work has been completed on a dike and other facilities along the lower Colorado River to establish a stable water level in the Topock Marsh and maintain the area's important fish and wildlife and recreation resources.

The Topock Marsh, on the Arizona side of the Colorado River midway between the Bureau of Reclamation's Davis and Parker dams, is an important wintering area for migratory waterfowl and supports a productive warm water fishery. It is part of the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, administered and managed by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

The value of the marsh for fish and wildlife and recreational purposes had been seriously reduced through natural forces by the scouring action of the Colorado River paralleling the marsh. This action degraded the river bed and lowered the water level in the marsh, thus preventing the circulation of fresh water essential for feeding and breeding of wildlife.

A 3½-mile-long dike, inlet channel, and inlet and outlet structures, and a dredged boating access channel at the lower end of the marsh near Topock have been constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation under a joint agreement with the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, both agencies of the Department of the Interior.

Further cooperative work between the two Interior agencies will result in establishing about 4,000 acres of open water in the marsh, about 3,000 acres of low land for waterfowl food production, and about 4,000 acres of more or less natural vegetation for cover areas for upland game and birds.

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Construction of the dike and the inlet and outlet works will insure controlled water levels within Topock Marsh that will not vary with fluctuations in the Colorado River, and will provide dependable resting and feeding areas for migratory waterfowl and access through the marsh by boat for fishing and hunting. These facilities have been specifically designed to utilize not more than the amount of water allocated to Havasu National Wildlife Refuge by the 1964 Supreme Court decree in Arizona vs. California.

With the development of the dike and other facilities to stabilize the Topock Marsh, it is expected that the area will be much more attractive to waterfowl and that many more birds will make use of its resting and feeding grounds.

Personnel of the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge estimate that the marsh provides about 125,000 man-days of fishing a year. Large mouth bass and catfish abound in the area.

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(Note to Editors: Photographs of the Topock Marsh area are available from Bureau of Reclamation, Washington, D. C. 20240.)

